

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. This Amendment should be entered under Rule 116 in that it is submitted as placing this application in condition for allowance.

Claim Amendment/Status

In this response, claims 4 and 6 have been cancelled, claims 3 and 5 have been rewritten to assume independent form. Claim 1 has been amended to improve syntax and form and to clarify the subject matter set forth therein over the claimed subject matter. Claims 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 therefore remain pending in the application.

Inasmuch as claims 3, 5 and 7 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter, it is submitted that the above-mentioned amendments place these claims in *prima facie* condition for allowance.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102/103

The rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Bean (US647,435), is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

1) Bean (US 647,435) has such a structure wherein the lock piece (D) is slidably arranged in the case B, and wherein the lock piece D linearly moves relative to the axial member (A) so as to become engaged with the axial member (A). Also, the lock piece (D) is inserted into the hole formed in the axial member (A), so that the lock piece (D) becomes engaged with the axial member (A).

Incidentally, in the claimed arrangement, the case has the tapered section, which has a slope that gradually moves away from the axial member along the insertion direction of the axial member. Such a tapered section is not formed in the case of Bean. Additionally, in the claimed arrangement, the slide surface, which is inclined in the same direction as the slope of the tapered section, and which slides along the tapered section, is formed on the lock piece. Such a slide surface is not formed on the lock piece of Bean.

In Bean, the lock piece (D) is not guided in such a way to be inserted into the hole of the axial member (A), and thus it is difficult for the lock piece (D) to become engaged with the axial member A, which presents a problem. Also, in order for the lock piece (D) to become engaged with the axial member (A), it is necessary to select a suitable posture of the axial member (A) in such a way that the hole of the axial member A aligns the lock piece (D), and so that the axial member (A) can be inserted into the case (B).

2) In the claimed arrangement, the tapered section 1b, which has a slope that gradually goes away from the axial member 6 along the insertion direction of the axial member 6, is formed on the case 1. The slide surface 3b, which is inclined in the same direction as the slope of the tapered section 1b, is formed on the lock piece 3. The lock piece 3 slides along the tapered section 1b while the slide surface 3b is in contact with the tapered section 1b, so that the lock piece 3 becomes engaged with the axial member 6. Meanwhile, when the lock piece 3 slides in the opposite direction, the lock piece 3 becomes disengaged from the axial member 6.

In this manner, only by the sliding of the lock piece 3 along the tapered section 1b, the lock piece 3 can become engaged with the axial member 6. Accordingly, it is easy for the lock piece 3 to become engaged with the axial member 6. Also, it is not necessary to select a suitable posture of the axial member 6 so as to be inserted into the case 1.

As described above, the invention as now claimed in claim 1 has a structure that is not disclosed in Bean.

3) The lock piece (D) of Bean is used to prevent the axial member (A) and the case (B) from rotating relative to each other after they are coupled with each other. For the axial member A to be coupled with the case (B), it is necessary to rotate the axial member (A) while the axial member A is being inserted into the case (B). This is because, when the axial member (A) is only inserted into the case (B), the male thread of the axial member (A) does not screw with the female thread of the case (B).

With the claimed arrangement, when the axial member 6 is inserted into the case 1, the lock piece 3 slides along the tapered section 1b of the case 1. Via this sliding, the engagement teeth (female thread) 3a of the lock piece 3 become meshed with the male thread of the axial member (bolt) 6. Thus, the lock piece 3 becomes engaged with the axial member 6, and the axial member 6 becomes locked. In this manner, there is no need for rotating the axial member

6 to lock the axial member 6, and therefore, it is easy to achieve locking of the axial member 6.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the claims as they have been amended are allowable over the art which has been applied in this Office Action. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,  
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